DIGITAL INCLUSION OF SENIOR COLLECTIVES THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES OF CO-CREATION OF DIGITAL TOOLS: DESIGN OF A MOOC

L. Bueno-Sánchez¹, S. Martínez-Molina¹, S. Marques de Almeida Cunha¹, J. Garcés¹, D. Pérez², M. Quílez²

¹University of Valencia (SPAIN)
²Coordina (SPAIN)

Abstract

In a historical moment where senior citizens in advanced societies increase their life expectancy and, in turn, new information and communication technologies evolve, develop and advance at breakneck speed; the participatory inclusion of the senior generations in the digital society becomes necessary.

Life expectancy has increased in recent years, as shown in the report "Evolution of the family in Europe 2018 European Parliament": on average about 10 years in the last 50 years. On the other hand, 1 in 5 Europeans (19.2% of the population) is over 65 years old, surpassing 97.7 million people. The population over 80 years old reaches 25 million people, and now represents 5.1% of the population¹.

The Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament, at its meeting on education in the digital age: challenges, opportunities and lessons for the design of the Union's policies carried out in December 2018, warned that 44% of the population of the Union The European population between the ages of 16 and 74 years lack basic digital capabilities, which causes a situation that threatens to create a new social fracture and significant gaps between men and women and between generations and social groups¹. For this reason, the commission proposes lifelong learning in digital competencies of different governments in cooperation with all stakeholders, such as companies and civil society organizations, and through formal and non-formal frameworks, to guarantee a sustainable digital transformation. in which no one is excluded.

The social constructions on aging, where care principles prevailed, have been transformed in the last decades towards some improvements in which potentiality and active aging form the pillars of previous generations. In this sense, new technologies stand out as necessary entry doors for digital inclusion, empowerment and the "activation" of the elders of our time.

For all the above, this article aims to serve as an example of the achievement of the appropriation of digital skills by including older people in the processes of co-creation and co-validation of online tools and their content, specifically through the Design of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) designed to promote the active life of older people through the collaborative economy. MOOCs, as demonstrated in recent years, allow to facilitate and guarantee the quality training of any group, regardless of their geographical situation or age².

The participants of this project met in two sessions (co-creation and co-validation) in Spain, Greece, Germany, France and Austria, at two different times to determine the structure and content of a MOOC for the elderly and the General population interested in the processes of activation of older people and in the collaborative economy. In them, 40 people participated with the following population profiles: elderly people, local representatives of older people and professionals who work daily with these groups. At the conclusion of the sessions, significant improvements were made in aspects such as the autonomy in the management of ICT, the adaptation of tools to all groups, the construction of new meanings on the opportunities offered by ICT for the elderly, overcoming barriers and encouraging creativity through assets. Participation of the entire process of gestation of the tool.

Keywords: digital society, MOOCs, active aging, co-creation.

1 INTRODUCTION

There are two undeniable facts that are changing our societies and we must keep this in mind for the future of society in general. On the one hand, the population ages faster. On the other hand, the digital era has come into our lives to stay. For this reason, it is necessary to adequately combine the
relationships between the aging population and new digital and information technologies. So much so that the European Parliament at its last meeting on education in the digital age: challenges, opportunities and lessons for the design of Union policies points to the need for all member countries to put their efforts into bridging the gap existing digital system between the elderly and the rest of the population. As well as in increasing the digital skills of senior people from formal and informal education. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines it as the "physiological process that begins in conception and causes changes in the characteristics of the species throughout the life cycle; these changes produce a limitation of the adaptability of the organism in relation to the environment. The rhythms to which these changes occur in the various organs of the same individual or in different individuals are not the same".

As seen for decades, life expectancy in advanced societies is increasing. Senior people (aged 65 or older) had a percentage of 19.4% (an increase of 0.2 percentage points compared to the previous year and an increase of 2.4 percentage points compared to ten years earlier)\(^5\). According to data provided by the United Nations, it is expected that by 2050 people over 60 will double their number with respect to 2017\(^3\) data. Worldwide, the group of older people grows faster than the number of young people. Given the increase in the number of aged people, old age is considered a public health problem and a global phenomenon due to its social, political and economic consequences.

Access to digital media is not uniform. That is, there are groups with greater difficulties than others to have digital media and / or the resources needed to access them. The diffusion of ICT can have several consequences, not only in the economic sphere but also in the social and political level. It is capable of narrowing or reinforcing already existing inequalities and even creating new ones in the socially most punished groups (women, people at risk of extinction, senior people ...). In this sense, at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) it has sought to achieve a vision, a desire and a common commitment to build a society of information centered on people, inclusive and development.

MOOCs, as demonstrated in recent years, allow to facilitate and guarantee the quality training of any group, regardless of their geographical situation or age\(^5\). In addition, MOOCs allow users to adapt to their needs and disseminate knowledge on any topic of interest.

The development of the present project served as a guiding thread to generate change in the constructions about what it means to be an older person at present and the potentialities offered by the elderly themselves, as well as their digital inclusion. That is, the inclusion of key people in a society increasingly digitalized and aging at the same time. Combating, in addition, social problems such as the digital divide, loneliness etc. and strengthening links between different generations and collectives.

2 METHODOLOGY

During the month of March 2018, a total of 40 people met in France, Spain, Austria, Greece and Germany to hold discussion groups around general issues about the concept "active aging" through digital tools and collaborative economy nonprofit. We used visual and dynamic material. The profile of the participants is summarized in: elderly people, local representatives of older people and professionals who work daily with these groups.

In the sessions participants were provided with visual material with basic concepts that served to motivate the debate around the social construction of old age, the collaborative economy platforms and the digital society. After the debates generated, a SWOT analysis was carried out with the most relevant consensual contributions.

The research team materialized the ideas contributed by the participants in the design of the blended course. During the month of May 2018, the participants of the previous session were reunited to co-validate the design. In this way, a draft of how the MOOC platform and its content could be configured was shown. Finally, suggestions for change and improvement and the general satisfaction of the participants during the sessions were collected through questionnaires.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Aging society

On the one hand, results were collected with respect to the change of conception on ageing and capacity of "activation" of this group: the results showed that the elderly improve their self-concept by participating in a process of collective creation.

They relate experience and available time with potentials and strengths that can bring great benefits to society in general.

Exchange and intergenerational relationships are conceived as very positive for all groups.

As difficulties or barriers were found first, access to older people who remain "inactive" in their homes. For this reason, the participants considered essential the participation of families and local social services as activators of older people, especially in those elderly people at high risk of suffering loneliness or at risk-social exclusion.

3.2 MOOC Platforms

On the other hand, results were obtained with respect to what the online platforms and tools should be: all the participants agreed on the need for face-to-face support during the beginning of the use of technologies and information and information tools.

The platforms chosen by consensus were in general all the online platforms that offer an open and free service and in particular MOOC platforms.

Some concrete elements were pointed out for the design of the MOOC, such as the use of large typography, that the platform was very "intuitive" and that the platform also facilitated its use.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Older people are increasingly perceived as key elements of social development; they are a key collective in their own development. The processes of participation and co-creation help to improve the perception of old age and the vital meaning of aging; Participation in the creation and design of MOOC platforms generates security and general welfare in the elderly.

Seniors people and people who have direct contact with this group affirm that the inclusion of this group in the use of digital tools, platforms and social networks is totally necessary to eliminate inequalities and digital gaps. For this reason, inclusive policies on digital material and creation of resources that reach all older people are needed.

MOOC platforms and their design through collective participation can be powerful tools for social inclusion.

REFERENCES


